

MEDIA RELEASE

Alcohol guidelines here just in time for Christmas

Monday 14 December 2020

Tasmanians need to be more aware than ever when it comes to the health impacts of drinking alcohol, and the newly updated alcohol guidelines can help us do just that, according to the Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council Tasmania (ATDC).

ATDC chief executive Alison Lai said that recently updated alcohol guidelines, released last week by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC), will help inform the estimated 83 per cent of Tasmanians aged 14 years and over who have consumed alcohol in the last 12 months¹.

"These updated guidelines have come at an important time for many Tasmanians as we move into Christmas and New Year celebrations, which are often associated with an increase in the amount of alcohol we drink," Mrs Lai said.

"Estimates suggest that over 340,000 Tasmanians have had an alcoholic drink in the last year, and these guidelines are important in helping Tasmanians decide how much alcohol they plan to drink, if they choose to drink at all."

Data from 2019 estimates that 17 per cent of Tasmanians aged 14 and over drink alcohol at levels that will cause long-term harm. That's approximately 69,670 members of our community¹.

In addition, in 2019 it is estimated that 109,122 Tasmanians aged 14 years and over drank more than four standard drinks in one sitting at least monthly (commonly known as binge-drinking)¹.

"We also know that in 2020 alcohol consumption has increased across the State, with spikes in retail sales and research showing 20 per cent of people bought more alcohol during COVID-19 lockdown than they normally did²," Mrs Lai said.

"The NHMRC guidelines are especially important for Tasmanians as we come into end-of-year festivities and the relaxing of physical distancing restrictions."

Based on the latest scientific evidence, the updated NHMRC guidelines have been developed to help all of us understand how to reduce the risks of harm from drinking alcohol.

The three guidelines are: <https://www.nhmrc.gov.au/health-advice/alcohol>

- **To reduce the risk of harm from alcohol-related disease or injury, healthy men and women should drink no more than 10 standard drinks a week and no more than 4 standard drinks on any one day. The less you drink, the lower your risk of harm from alcohol.**
- **To reduce the risk of injury and other harms to health, children and people under 18 years of age should not drink alcohol.**
- **To prevent harm from alcohol to their unborn child, women who are pregnant or planning a pregnancy should not drink alcohol. For women who are breastfeeding, not drinking alcohol is safest for their babies.**

"The majority of Tasmanians are making choices that reduce the health risks when it comes to their drinking," Mrs Lai said.

"However we know that there are thousands of Tasmanians who drink at levels that will cause long-term harm, and these new guidelines help us increase awareness of what is considered a risky level of drinking and help ensure more Tasmanians are making healthy choices when it comes to how much they are drinking.

"This isn't about telling you what you can and can't do, nor is it a prescription for how much you should drink, it's about giving you a guide for how to best reduce your health risks from drinking alcohol."

Tasmanians who have concerns about their alcohol consumption are urged to reach out for support.

"Support is available and Tasmanians should not hesitate to reach out if they have concerns about themselves or others," Mrs Lai said.

ATDC Media Contact: Alison Lai, CEO – 0450 517 017



No Harm, No Discrimination

Suite 1, Level 1, 175 Collins Street, Hobart, Tasmania 7000
PO Box 4702 Bathurst Street PO, Hobart TAS 7000
9am – 5pm Monday to Friday | P 03 6231 5002
E admin@atdc.org.au | atdc.org.au

Seek support

Alcohol and Drug Information Service - 1800 811 994

Family Drug Support - 1300 368 186

Alcohol and Drug Services - 1300 139 641

Quitline - 13 7848

Tasmanian alcohol and other drug service directory – www.atdc.org.au/service-directory

Who are the ATDC? The Alcohol, Tobacco and other Drugs Council of Tasmania is the peak body representing and supporting community organisations, and the people they assist, to reduce alcohol, tobacco and other drug related harm for all Tasmanians.

Our vision is a Tasmania without alcohol, tobacco or other drug related harm or discrimination.

LANGUAGE MATTERS – Language is powerful, especially when discussing alcohol and other drugs and the people who use them. Stigmatising language reinforces negative stereotypes. “Person-centred” language focuses on the person, not their substance use.

When reporting on people who use alcohol and other drugs...	
Try this 	Not this 
Substance use, non-prescribed use	Abuse, misuse, problem use, non-compliant use
Person who uses drugs	Drug user, drug abuser
Person with a dependence on....	Addict, junkie, druggie, alcoholic
Person experiencing drug dependence	Suffering from addiction, has a drug habit
Person who has stopped using drugs	Clean, sober, drug-free
Person with lived experience of drug dependence	Ex-addict, former addict, used to be a...
Please see the attached Language matters resource attached or at: www.nada.org.au/resources/language-matters/	

¹ [National Drug Strategy Household Survey 2019](#)

² [Alcohol sales and use during COVID-19, Foundation for Alcohol Research and Education \(FARE\)](#)



No Harm, No Discrimination

Suite 1, Level 1, 175 Collins Street, Hobart, Tasmania 7000

PO Box 4702 Bathurst Street PO, Hobart TAS 7000

9am – 5pm Monday to Friday | P 03 6231 5002

E admin@atdc.org.au | atdc.org.au